

Remarks

Regarding the rejection under 35 USC 101, the claims have been amended to replace the term, "via" by the term, "by." The Examiner said this would overcome the 101 rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Thackston (US 2002/0072820) and further in view of Thackston (US 6,295,513). The Examiner states, "Thackston discloses a system and process method for facilitating efficient communication of specifications for parts and assemblies ..."

Generally, the applicants' invention and Thackston each have a project owner and a plurality of contractors. The owner requests that a product be made, and the contractors help make it. Differences between the applicants' invention and Thackston lie in the interaction between the owner and the contractors. With Thackston, the interaction is a "daisywheel" relationship where the owner is at the hub dealing with the contractors around the periphery (Fig. 2 of Thackston patent 6,295,513). In contrast, the applicants claim a "relay" approach where the owner initiates a product request at the beginning of the line, and the manufacturing process can pass sequentially from one remote contractor to the next (second last paragraph of claim 1 and the last sentence of paragraph [0075] of present application).

Applicants' claim 1 specifically recites, "inducing the specific company to forward the electronic specification with the appended operability test result to another one of the plurality of companies." Thackston fails to disclose or suggest this element of the applicants' invention.

The vast majority, if not all, of the communication steps of Thackston pertains to the design process, wherein the designers and manufacturers interact cooperatively in designing the product. It appears that only after completing the interactive design process is the product actually manufactured (Fig. 1, Thackston, 6,295,513). Although Thackston refers to testing during the design process, Thackston fails to disclose testing the product and appending operability test results during the manufacturing cycle. Applicants' amended claim 1, however, specifically recites, "after building the product or the

component thereof, testing the product or the component thereof," and "upon testing the product or component thereof, creating an operability test result" and "appending, by the computer system, the operability test result to the electronic specification."

Regarding claim 7, Thackston mentions design changes prior to manufacturing but fails to disclose, "after the specific company building the product or component thereof, revising the updated version to include late customer changes," as specifically recited in currently amended claim 7.

Claims 6 and 8 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thackston (US 2002/0072820), and further in view of Thackston (US 6,295,513) and further in view of Sanchez-Lazer (US 6,000,945). The applicants, however, maintain that the Sanchez-Lazer reference is irrelevant for the reasons presented in the previous Office Action response, which the applicants submitted on November 25, 2009. The Examiner has not yet addressed or refuted the applicants' arguments pertaining to Sanchez-Lazer.

Claims 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 16-22 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thackston (US 2002/0072820), and further in view of Thackston (US 6,295,513) and further in view of Marchak (US 6,138,104), and further in view of Hunt (US 5,042,668), and further in view of Cho (US 5,295,067).

Regarding claim 10, the rejection fails to point out where the cited references disclose any of the following steps:

- calling for an input or output component to be operably connected to the communication bus as identified by the installation sequence
- verifying the operability of the components and the bus
- receiving the first signal from the component by means of the bus
- determining a unique identify for the signaling component
- responding, by means of the bus, with a second signal to the component providing the component with an identity.

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In view of the above amendments and remarks, the applicants submit that the current claims are neither anticipated nor obvious in view of the cited art, thus the Examiner is respectfully requested to allow claims 1-8, 10, 11, 13 and 16-22.

Respectfully submitted,



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